



NEWS

LIVINGSTON PARISH PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Veterans' Memorial nears completion

LIVINGSTON, LOUISIANA – The Veterans' Memorial Plaza honoring living and deceased veterans across the nation is nearing completion.

The stunning plaza at Albany High School in Albany, Louisiana, consists of five brick walls that will display the names of men and women who have served in all branches of the military. At the center is a massive American flag mounted atop a lighted 60-foot flagpole. The memorial itself is flanked by ten 30-foot flagpoles bearing flags representing the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, the Marines, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Merchant Marines, POWs and MIAs, the State of Louisiana, the AMVETS and the American Legion.

The memorial was the vision of the Albany Memorial Committee – a group of Livingston Parish veterans who wanted to honor the commitment and sacrifice of veterans through their military service, as well as ensure that future generations understand, appreciate and remember the price they paid to preserve democracy and freedom.

"This memorial is unique in that it's not just a war memorial; it is a memorial to all veterans," says Albany Memorial Committee President S.D. Kinchen. "We honor all those who wore a uniform, whether they saw combat or not."

In 2004, the committee, the Livingston Parish School Board and the Livingston Parish President's Office began planning for the plaza. In 2005, Livingston Parish President Mike Grimmer requested an appropriation for the project through then-U.S. Congressman Richard

Baker and U.S. Senator David Vitter. A grant for \$99,000 from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development Economic Development Initiative arrived in May of 2007.

Julius Prokop – the liaison to the Livingston Parish School Board – made the arrangements to locate the memorial on the Albany High School site.

Future phases of the Veterans' Memorial Plaza will include a statue overlooking the plaza, an open-air outdoor classroom with bleachers adjacent to the plaza and a website promoting the site and associated activities. Plans are for the attraction to seek designation as a National Memorial.

"This striking memorial will be a source of tremendous pride for all citizens of Livingston Parish," Livingston Parish President Mike Grimmer says. "When you gaze upon that massive flag and the bricks that are to bear the names of those who served, your heart is genuinely moved by the incredible sacrifice they made."

The plaza was designed by Jones Architects LLC of Livingston Parish. The firm donated its architectural and engineering services to make the project possible.

"So many people have been supportive of us and our effort to build this memorial," Kinchen says. "In particular, we are grateful to our present school board member Sid Kinchen, Superintendent Bill Spears, and former superintendents Randy Pope and Warren Curtis."

Members of the Albany Memorial Committee include President S.D. Kinchen, Secretary Johnny Gill, Financial Officer Lloyd "Gene" Glascock, Glennis Bennett, Paul "Buddy" Farkas, Ivy "Buddy" Harper Jr., Allen "Bootsie" Jones, Julius Prokop, William "Billy" Prokop, Dillard Stewart, Oscar K. "Johnny" Stewart, Donald Stilley, Major Edward Johnson [deceased] and Liaison Officer Sid Kinchen.

Those who wish to memorialize a veteran can still do so. Bricks are available for \$60 each. For more information, call Albany High School at 225-567-9319, Albany Town Hall at 225-567-1101 or Gene Glascock at 985-974-2671.

If you wish to make a donation to the Veterans' Memorial Plaza, make checks payable to "Albany High School Veterans' Memorial Plaza Fund," and send them to the Veterans' Memorial Plaza Fund, P.O. Box 1090, Albany, LA., 70711.

A dedication ceremony is planned for late spring.

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